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GATESHEAD COUNCIL

STATUTORY PROPOSAL TO CLOSE HOOKERGATE SCHOOL

Contact details

1. The name of the LA or governing body publishing the proposals, and a contact address, and the name of the school it is proposed that should be discontinued.

Gateshead Council, Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE8 1HH proposes to discontinue Hookergate School, School Lane, High Spennings, NE39 2BX with effect from 31 August 2011.

Implementation

2. The date when it is planned that the proposals will be implemented, or, where the proposals are to be implemented in stages, information about each stage and the date on which each stage is planned to be implemented.

It is proposed to close Hookergate School with effect from 31st August 2011. Pupils attending Hookergate will transfer to Ryton Comprehensive School with effect from 1 September 2011. Admission may also be sought at other secondary schools which may have places available.

Consultation

3. A statement to the effect that all applicable statutory requirements to consult in relation to the proposals were complied with.

In consulting on the proposal to close Hookergate School, Gateshead Council has complied with the statutory procedures laid down in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) and the Secretary of State's guidance.

4. Evidence of the consultation before the proposals were published including:

- a) a list of persons and/or parties who were consulted;
- b) minutes of all public consultation meetings;
- c) the views of the persons consulted; and
- d) copies of all consultation documents and a statement of how these were made available.

Before the proposals were published the following list of people and organisations were consulted: -

- Headteachers and Governing Bodies of Hookergate School and Ryton Comprehensive School.
- Staff and parents/carers of Hookergate School and Ryton Comprehensive School.
- Students in Hookergate School and Ryton Comprehensive.
- Governing bodies of the primary schools linked to both Hookergate School and Ryton Comprehensive School.
- Parents/carers of pupils in the primary schools linked to both Hookergate

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School and Ryton Comprehensive.

- Headteachers and Governing Bodies of the other secondary schools in Gateshead.
- Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.
- Northumberland County Council
- Member of Parliament for the Blaydon constituency.
- Local Ward Councillors serving the Hookergate and Ryton primary catchment areas.
- Trade Unions
- Members of the public

A consultation document was designed to explore and seek comments on the proposals. The document also included a paper questionnaire for return to a FREEPOST address at Gateshead Council. Questionnaires were sent out, through the school network, to the parents, staff and governors at both Ryton Comprehensive and Hookergate Comprehensive. Questionnaires were also given to parents and governors of the primary schools linked to both secondary schools, via schools' distribution arrangements to their parents.

Further questionnaires were also distributed to union representatives, diocesan representatives, admission forum, west area forum, other secondary schools in the borough and the Director of Children's Services in neighbouring Northumberland County Council.

The documentation was also available on the council's website, so as to give access to members of the wider public, and a variety of ways to respond. The material on the website was identical to that in the consultation document to ensure that online results could be fed into the broader analysis of responses.

In addition, the Consultation Document was hand delivered to approx. 100 residents immediately adjacent to the proposed new site off Woodside Road.

Eight separate consultation meetings were held in the schools for the parents of children currently in or offered spaces from September 2010, members of staff and governors of Hookergate School or Ryton Comprehensive School.

Four separate public 'drop in' sessions for the parents from the linked primary schools and the wider community Four 'drop-in' sessions were held at the following venues: -

Hookergate School, Ryton Comprehensive School, Chopwell Primary School, Winlaton/Blaydon Surestart

Copies of the required evidence of consultation as set out in 4. a-d above, can be obtained from the Council's website www.gateshead.gov.uk/secondaryreview

Objectives

5. The objectives of the proposal.

The objectives of this proposal are to: -

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- a. Reduce surplus secondary school capacity in the west of Gateshead by closing Hookergate School;
- b. Ensure continuity of good quality educational provision in the area through a carefully managed transition process;
- c. Enable Ryton Comprehensive School to be the main secondary community school for 11-19 year olds in the West area, by incorporating the best features and many strengths of Hookergate School.

Standards and Diversity

6. A statement and supporting evidence indicating how the proposals will impact on the standards, diversity and quality of education in the area.

Hookergate School was a National Challenge school in 2007/08. Whilst Hookergate's results rose to 45% 5A*-C with English and Maths in 2008, the decreasing size of the school population has effected the the ability to maintain the level of curriculum innovation and standards.

Numbers on roll in September 2010 will be around 375 (11-16). Falling numbers reduce the budget available to governors and reductions in staffing have already had to be made to reflect this. Further reductions will be necessary in subsequent years and the quality of education offered would be at risk.

A staffing protocol has been agreed in principle between the Council, Hookergate School and Ryton Comprehensive School to maintain staffing stability throughout the transition process, to ensure educational standards are maintained and improved upon.

Provision for 16-19 year olds

7. Where the school proposed to be discontinued provides sixth form education, how the proposals will impact on:

- a) the educational or training achievements;
- b) participation in education or training; and
- c) the range of educational or training opportunities,

for 16-19 year olds in the area.

Effective September 2010, due to falling demand Hookergate is no longer able to offer places for students to start courses in the sixth form. Year 11 students were offered places in Ryton Comprehensive School. A larger Post 16 provision at Ryton Comprehensive School will provide more flexibility and choice for post 16 students in the West which has historically been reliant on small 6th form without specialist provision. Other Post 16 providers also serve this area.

Need for places

8. A statement and supporting evidence about the need for places in the area including whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils.

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It is proposed that all students currently in Hookergate will be offered places in Ryton Comprehensive School or any other secondary school in the area with capacity. At present there is insufficient capacity and the capacity and suitability of the accommodation on the existing Ryton site is currently being assessed against a proposed curriculum model and predicted student numbers. The Council will ensure sufficient suitable accommodation is available to meet the needs of students and staff.

9. Where the school has a religious character, a statement about the impact of the proposed closure on the balance of denominational provision in the area and the impact on parental choice.

N/A

Current School Information

10. Information as to the numbers, age range, sex and special educational needs of pupils (distinguishing between boarding and day pupils) for whom provision is made at the school.

Hookergate School is a 11 – 18 co-educational school. The current school has a planned admission number of 160 providing an 11 – 16 capacity of 800. The overall net capacity is 888. At PLASC January 10 it had 408 11-16 pupils on roll and 62 Post 16. There were 5 students with Statements of Special Education Needs (0.8%).

Displaced Pupils

11. Details of the schools or FE colleges which pupils at the school for whom provision is to be discontinued will be offered places, including:

- a) any interim arrangements;
- b) where the school included provision that is recognised by the LA as reserved for children with special educational needs, the alternative provision to be made for pupils in the school's reserved provision; and
- c) in the case of special schools, alternative provision made by LAs other than the authority which maintains the school.

It is also proposed that the Hookergate site be maintained for a further academic year (2011-12) to provide education for former Hookergate students starting Years 8, 9 and 11 only. The site will be managed as part of Ryton Comprehensive School. Former Hookergate students starting Year 10 will transfer to the Ryton site. Hookergate students starting Year 12 will be able to apply for places in the sixth form at the Ryton site, or with other post 16 providers. All existing Ryton students will continue to receive their education on the Ryton site. It is proposed that the Hookergate site should be decommissioned after the end of the academic year 2011-12 and that all staff and students be consolidated on the existing Ryton school site, with additional accommodation provided as necessary with effect from 1 September 2012. Details of the changes to SEN provision are set out in Section 20.

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12. Details of any other measures proposed to be taken to increase the number of school or FE college places available in consequence of the proposed discontinuance.

It is proposed that Ryton Comprehensive School increase its planned admission number from 215 to 240 increasing the 11-16 capacity from 1075 to 1200 and that the number of post 16 places be increased from 244 to 300. Pupils who would have started Year 7 at Hookergate in September 2011 will be able to apply for places at Ryton Comprehensive School, in accordance with the usual admissions procedure.

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Impact on the Community

13. A statement and supporting evidence about the impact on the community and any measures proposed to mitigate any adverse impact.

Hookergate School is not used by the community to any great extent, other than an occasional venue for local sports clubs. The brand new purpose built leisure centre in Blaydon approx. 3 miles away is due to open in Autumn 2010.

14. Details of extended services the school offered and what it is proposed for these services once the school has discontinued.

Hookergate School sits within the Hookergate Extended Services Cluster, with their linked primary schools who currently provide full access to the extended schools core offer. Hookergate School an occasional venue for local sports clubs.

Following Hookergate's closure, its linked primary schools will form part of the Ryton Extended Services Cluster. In addition there are other services, activities and facilities available that can be booked by community groups within the West Area e.g. Ryton Comprehensive, Chopwell Pioneer Centre, the new leisure centre in Blaydon. The Hookergate Cluster therefore would still be providing 100% core offer.

Travel

15. Details of the length and journeys to alternative provision.

Ryton Comprehensive to Rowlands Gill Primary **5,506 metres / 3.42 miles**
Ryton Comprehensive to Highfield Primary **5,797 metres / 3.60 miles**
Ryton Comprehensive to High Spen **4,758 metres / 2.96 miles**
Ryton Comprehensive to Chopwell Primary **6,624 metres / 4.12 miles**
Ryton Comprehensive to Winlaton West Lane Primary **3,615 metres / 2.25 miles**
Ryton Comprehensive to Parkhead Primary **4,361 metres / 2.71 miles**
Currently there is a scholars' service serving each of the above routes. In addition there is regular commercial bus services running every hour, linking Chopwell and High Spen to Ryton.

16. The proposed arrangements for travel of displaced pupils to other schools including how they will help to work against increased car use.

The following primary schools are currently part of the Hookergate catchment area; Chopwell, High Spen, Highfield, Rowlands Gill, Parkhead and Winlaton West Lane. It is proposed that the catchment areas for all these schools be included in the catchment area of Ryton School, together with all its existing linked primary school catchment areas. A review of home to school public transport is in progress, to promote access to Ryton School from all areas without the need for additional car journeys. The Council's existing Home to School Transport Policy will apply.

Related Proposals

17. A statement as to whether in the opinion of the LA or governing body, the proposals are related to any other proposals which may have been, are, or are about to be published.

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There are no related proposals.

Rural Primary Schools

18. Where proposals relate to a rural primary school designated as such by an order made for the purposes of section 15, a statement that the LA or the governing body (as the case may be) considered:

- a) the likely effect of discontinuance of the school on the local community;
- b) the availability, and likely cost to the LA, of transport to other schools;
- c) any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the discontinuance of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase; and
- d) any alternatives to the discontinuance of the school,

as required by section 15(4)

NA

Maintained nursery schools

19. Where proposals relate to the discontinuance of a maintained nursery school, a statement setting out:

- a) the consideration that has been given to developing the school into a children's centre and the grounds for not doing so;
- b) the LA's assessment of the quality and quantity of alternative provision compared to the school proposed to be discontinued and the proposed arrangements to ensure the expertise and specialism continues to be available; and
- c) the accessibility and convenience of replacement provision for local parents.

NA

Special educational provision

20. Where existing provision that is recognised by the LA as reserved for pupils with special educational needs is being discontinued, a statement as to how the LA or the governing body believes the proposal is likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of the educational provision for these children.

It is proposed to discontinue the Mainstream Support Base (MSB) attached to Hookergate School, which offers places for up to 16 pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Over recent years the MSB has been underused with a significant number of vacancies. Children with SEN will continue to have their requirements met at Ryton School or such other local secondary school selected by parents. The SEN Improvement Test has been applied and the Local Authority concluded that an inclusive model rather than tuition in a special class is more appropriate to meet the needs of these children.